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Chairperson: Mr. Metelitsa ..... (Belarus)

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08-58877 (E)

Agenda item 52: Groups of countries in special situations (*continued*)

(a) Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (*continued*)

(b) Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (*continued*)

08-58877

In the absence of Ms. Ogwu (Nigeria), Mr. Metelitsa (Belarus), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 46: Information and communication technologies for development (*continued*) (A/C.2/63/L.10)

Draft resolution on information and communication technologies for development

Agenda item 49: Sustainable development (*continued*)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*) (A/C.2/63/L.12 and L.13)

Draft resolution on the follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Draft resolution entitled "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations"

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (*continued*) (A/C.2/63/L.14)

Draft resolution on international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (*continued*) (A/C.2/63/L.15)

Draft resolution on the protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*) (A/C.2/63/L.16)

Draft resolution on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/C.2/63/L.17)

Draft resolution on the Convention on Biological Diversity

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session (*continued*) (A/C.2/63/L.18)

Draft resolution on the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session

Agenda item 53: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (*continued*) (A/C.2/63/L.11 and L.25)

Draft resolution on the role of microcredit and microfinance in the eradication of poverty

Draft resolution on the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)

1. **Ms. Greenaway** (Antigua and Barbuda) introduced draft resolutions A/C.2/L.10 to L.18 and L.25 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and said that she hoped the Committee would support their adoption.

Agenda item 52: Groups of countries in special situations (*continued*)

(a) Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (*continued*) (A/63/77-E/2008/61 and A/63/284)

(b) Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (*continued*) (A/63/165; A/63/L.3)

2. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to continue its general discussion on the item.

3. **Mrs. Aitimova** (Kazakhstan) said that the economies of all countries had been adversely affected by the global financial, fuel and food crises, but least developed countries, landlocked developing countries

and small island developing States had been especially impacted. Kazakhstan reaffirmed its commitment to the Monterrey Consensus and looked forward to discussing the international financial architecture and macroeconomic policy issues at the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in Doha.

4. In order to sustain the country's level of socio-economic development, the Government of Kazakhstan had mitigated the negative consequences of the global crises through a variety of measures on an unprecedented scale. Those included mechanisms to respond to economic instability, modernize the economy and manage risk. Funds had been allocated to recapitalize the major banks and financial securities market, stabilize the housing market, support small and medium-sized enterprises, and increase social benefits and pension payments for socially marginalized groups.

5. The Declaration adopted at the High-level Meeting devoted to the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action showed broad recognition of the needs of landlocked developing countries and much stronger engagement by donor countries. The draft outcome document for the Doha Review Conference (A/CONF.212/CRP.1) offered innovative approaches to finding additional sources of financing, in particular involving new donors from the business sector and philanthropy and the wider participation of civil society. Kazakhstan would be very interested in sharing best practices on strengthening cooperation between the public and private sectors. With a view to enhancing efforts to overcome obstacles to strengthen good governance at all levels, as stated, the document should be revised to include practical measures rather than merely declarations. Practical details should also be included on how to improve national tax policies and mobilize domestic financial resources for development.

6. **Mr. Jongkor** (Sudan) said that, despite progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, the social and economic situation of such countries remained precarious. It was important to strengthen partnerships between least developed countries and their development partners and to ensure that the unique concerns of those countries were part of any global solution to the current global crises.

7. The Government of the Sudan reaffirmed its commitment to achieving the goals of the Brussels Programme of Action. The Sudan would have to massively mobilize national efforts to address the issue of poverty by 2010; the revitalization of the agricultural sector remained a priority in that regard. The country would also need support from the international community in the area of capacity-building in order to diversify its economic base. He called on international donors to honour their pledges to help sustain the peace dividend by assisting Sudanese reconstruction and development efforts. He looked forward to the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which he trusted would pave the way forward for the least developed countries by tackling emerging global challenges.

8. **Mr. Natchiappan** (India) said that the Brussels Programme of Action provided a useful framework for addressing the many challenges facing the least developed countries. While welcoming the significant growth achieved by those countries, as a group, over the past decade, his delegation remained concerned that it had made little dent on poverty and had even deepened social disparities. Clearly, sustained economic growth did not automatically translate into the achievement of development objectives.

9. Greater international support, particularly from developed countries, was needed if the least developed countries were to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Support must focus on increasing financial and technical assistance for the national development strategies of the least developed countries and must address the specific obstacles to the economic and social development of those countries. Unfortunately, such support had not been forthcoming.

10. A new, integrated approach to the problems of the least developed countries should include additional financing, enhanced market access for products from the least developed countries, measures to ensure long-term sustainability of debt burden, technology transfer at affordable rates and institutional capacity-building. The fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would be an important step in developing such an approach; he hoped participants would examine the constraints of the least developed countries and commit to concrete actions to assist them. India had actively demonstrated its commitment

in that regard; nevertheless, efforts by developing countries could only complement those of developed countries.

11. With regard to countries graduating from the list of least developed countries, it was important to bear in mind the development challenges they continued to face. He urged the international community to assist them in the post-graduation phase to ensure that their achievements were sustained; he also supported the request by many of the least developed countries for a re-examination of the graduation criteria.

12. Any effective solution to the problems of landlocked developing countries must also address those of their transit developing neighbours. He welcomed the outcome of the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action, and looked forward to concrete actions in the area of financial and technical assistance in order to address trade and transit issues holistically.

13. India accorded the highest priority to further strengthening ties with its landlocked neighbours, including through regional initiatives, and would continue to contribute economic and technical support to their development efforts, as well as those of other landlocked and transit developing countries, as part of South-South cooperation. It was important to note that regions within some developing countries faced difficulties similar to those of landlocked developing countries in accessing global markets. He therefore called for international cooperation in meeting the special transit requirements of landlocked regions within a country.

14. **Ms. Gustava** (Mozambique) said that measures taken to address the current global crises should take into account the special needs of the least developed countries. If poverty reduction was to be effective in real terms, measures to reduce the gap between rich and poor should accompany efforts to promote economic growth. Donor countries should honour their commitments to provide 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) as official development assistance (ODA) to the least developed countries and should support a successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round.

15. The Government of Mozambique was fully committed to implementing the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action and had taken significant steps to reduce poverty and promote sustainable and equitable development. Emphasis had been placed on human development, infrastructure expansion and the creation of a favourable business environment. Significant progress had been achieved; nevertheless, the country's vulnerability to natural disasters and limited access to financial resources continued to hamper its poverty reduction and sustainable development efforts.

16. She welcomed the note by the Secretary-General (A/63/284) and said that the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would be an opportunity to work towards a results-oriented action plan for the following decade. She expressed hope that the resolution to be adopted would pave the way for a meaningful preparatory process for the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

17. **Mr. Al-Awadhi** (Yemen) said that the global food crisis had pushed the number of undernourished to almost 1 billion, and that in his country 5 million citizens were eating less than one meal a day. His Government had worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to develop short- and medium-term plans to achieve food security, but those efforts were in need of more support from the international community. He called on the developed States to facilitate transfer of technology, improved seeds and modern irrigation techniques and to stop production of biofuels, which exacerbated the rise in food commodity prices.

18. Average annual ODA per person in his country was 13 dollars, compared with 33 dollars for countries with similar economic conditions. He called on international partners to meet the agreed ODA targets of 0.7 per cent for developing countries and 0.2 per cent for the least developed countries. External indebtedness was also impacting his country's development plans negatively, and he called for cancellation of least developed countries' debts and expansion of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, it being understood that debt relief should not be counted as part of ODA. Assistance was also needed to confront natural disasters caused by climate change, such as the recent rains and flooding in the eastern provinces of his country that had killed hundreds, displaced thousands and destroyed farmland and infrastructure. His country looked forward to taking part in the Doha Review Conference, which he hoped would overcome obstacles to implementation of

the Monterrey Consensus and impart momentum to the global partnership for development.

19. **Mr. Paudel** (Nepal) said that the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries suffered from weak infrastructure and inadequate human resources. Such countries were not able to cope with emerging challenges, which had in turn increased their vulnerability and marginalization. Additional and targeted international support was needed to address existing and new challenges. Unless a substantial and predictable flow of development resources reached the least developed countries, their development efforts would continue to suffer. Swift delivery on trade and debt relief promises was urgently needed.

20. It was important to develop stronger strategic partnerships and to conduct a comprehensive appraisal of progress achieved thus far. In that connection, he welcomed the note by the Secretary-General (A/63/284) and emphasized the importance of creating synergies and contributing to a broad-based preparatory process for the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. He also welcomed the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action, stressing the need to further strengthen the cooperation framework between landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries, and their development partners. Further international support must be provided to the landlocked developing countries to help them overcome their geographical and infrastructure-related disadvantages. Nepal was committed to taking specific actions towards that objective.

21. Following its historical transformation, the Government of Nepal had taken a series of measures to boost agricultural productivity and to harness water resources for energy security, and was committed to fostering an investment-friendly climate. As a country rich in cultural diversity and biodiversity, Nepal promoted sustainable tourism and was committed to addressing the impacts of climate change on agriculture and water resources.

22. **Mr. Soborun** (Mauritius), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, which aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the African least developed countries had adopted a number of measures to mainstream the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in their national development strategies and had achieved tangible results.

23. The challenges nevertheless remained daunting. Unless their constraints were addressed at all levels, the African least developed countries would not achieve the goals and targets of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. In addition to inadequate equipment and technology, those countries increasingly had to deal with environmental challenges. The lack of well-developed and reliable social and physical infrastructure continued to be a major obstacle for the least developed countries as they strove to achieve the objectives of the Brussels Programme of Action. As a result, it had become increasingly difficult to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). The shortage of information and communication technologies (ICT) had also prevented the least developed countries from benefiting from globalization.

24. The Doha Development Round was critical for the development of the least developed countries, which suffered from primary commodity dependency. Moreover, the inability of those countries to add value to agricultural commodities worsened the negative impacts of lower prices on their economies. Due to supply-side constraints, lack of trade capacity and non-tariff barriers, African least developed countries were not able to take full advantage of preferential market access initiatives. Brain drain as a result of migration of skilled workers was a major challenge for African least developed countries, whose human resource base was already very small. Finally, the current global financial crisis threatened to be an unprecedented catastrophe for developing countries, particularly the least developed.

25. It was necessary to invest in the productive capacity of the least developed countries, which in turn required increased assistance from donor countries and more efficient and transparent management of resources by the least developed countries. The African Group called on development partners to fulfil their commitments related to the development of groups of countries in special situations and looked forward to the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries as an opportunity to conduct a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and to decide on subsequent actions to assist the countries concerned.

26. **Mr. Buffa** (Paraguay) said that the measures adopted by the international community to mitigate the successive global crises must give special consideration to landlocked developing countries, the economies of which were particularly vulnerable. The Almaty Programme of Action was a crucial tool for achieving a fairer and more equitable relationship between Member States and international financial and development institutions, so as to overcome the asymmetry imposed by geographical situations.

27. With respect to the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action, there was a need to create favourable conditions for generating, attracting and mobilizing the resources to tackle the development problems of landlocked developing countries. To that end, he called on the international community and the financial and development institutions and donor countries in particular to scale up their support. Indeed, more resolute cooperation was needed from international financial institutions and greater ODA contributions was needed from donors. Also, transit countries should allocate resources for the development and maintenance of transport infrastructure, in order to enhance those countries' competitiveness on the international market.

28. Paraguay devoted all the technical resources it could afford from its limited budget to the Paraná-Paraguay waterway project, which channelled more than half of the country's international trade. His country was also part of the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America, which recognized the need to give priority to the region's landlocked developing countries, linking them to regional markets and seaports and establishing bioceanic corridors for multimodal transport.

29. With respect to the Almaty Programme of Action, the landlocked developing countries hoped for an international instrument containing binding rules and removing obstacles to trade, so as to facilitate more fluid and less costly transit of goods. He appealed to the members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to ensure that accession negotiations for landlocked developing countries took their predicament into account and did not require concessions beyond their economic, financial and development capacities.

30. He welcomed the support given by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to landlocked developing countries, and considered support from the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation to be of crucial importance in following up the commitments made at the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action.

31. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan) said that the food, fuel and financial crises and the impending global recession posed complex and daunting challenges for developing, least developed and landlocked developing countries and other countries in special situations. They faced difficulty in implementing development commitments and lacked the financial resources for implementation. The important gains made by countries in special situations in achieving internationally agreed development goals were in danger of reversal; and well-performing economies were being pushed into the ranks of those deemed to be in special situations because of serious financial and economic distress.

32. The United Nations system, working closely with the Bretton Woods institutions, should assess the impact of the crises on the efforts of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and other developing countries in distress. Those countries should be enabled to sustain the momentum of growth that they had achieved, and to scale up their efforts in graduating to a higher level of development, with immediate, adequate, grant-based and unconditional support and assistance from the international community.

33. Pakistan strongly supported least developed and landlocked developing countries in their quest for greater recognition of their special financial and technical needs, and was committed to helping them to overcome the obstacles to their development goals. He hoped that the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would undertake a comprehensive review of international support measures and identify future actions to advance the development needs and concerns of those countries. As a transit developing country, Pakistan was an active participant in the Almaty Programme of Action and was committed to providing easy, efficient and expeditious transit access to help landlocked neighbours expand their international trade.

34. **Mr. Naeemi** (Afghanistan) said that, in order to fulfil the commitments of the Brussels Programme of Action, the international community must support least

developed countries by providing them with the resources they needed. Increased global action was needed to secure implementation of that Programme of Action and to tackle the significant challenges faced by least developed countries, and post-conflict least developed countries such as Afghanistan in particular, owing to increased poverty and the global financial crisis. Indeed, comprehensive and decisive policy action was critically important at all levels to overcome the multiple crises which were unfolding and to which least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and post-conflict countries were particularly vulnerable.

35. The agricultural sector, so important in the economies of the least developed countries, remained the most underdeveloped owing to weak infrastructure, lack of capacity and of access to adequate energy and technology and low and volatile prices of agricultural products on the international market. Failure to address those issues would impede the ability of a number of least developed countries — particularly those emerging from conflicts — to achieve the internationally agreed development goals. To address the decline in the agricultural productivity of those countries and enhance their production, investment should be scaled up and modern technologies provided.

36. Since exports from least developed countries faced increasing challenges, he welcomed the offer of duty-free and quota-free market access by some developed and developing countries and invited others to follow suit. To address the marginalization of least developed countries in North-South trade and their increasing marginalization in South-South trade, capacity-building was urgently needed; the Aid for Trade Initiative should help them to address their supply-side constraints and preference erosion. Afghanistan also called for simplifying the accession process to WTO for least developed countries.

37. He reiterated his concern that the special circumstances of the least developed countries were not adequately reflected in the relevant reports of the Secretary-General, whereas it was acutely important to analyze their progress on a sectoral basis.

38. His delegation attached great importance to the final review of the Brussels Programme of Action and hoped that the outcome of the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would provide a new framework for partnership for sustainable development and economic growth so as to enable those countries to integrate progressively into the world economy.

39. **Mr. Boureima** (Niger) said that developing countries such as the Niger which were both least developed and landlocked were greatly vulnerable to external shocks and the food, energy and financial crises. Indeed, the financial crisis raised fears that developed countries might further reduce their ODA.

40. In that respect, the international community needed to show more understanding and solidarity in order to ensure the effective implementation of the Brussels and Almaty Programmes. He hoped that the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus would take decisions of crucial importance for all categories of countries in special situations.

41. **Ms. Zemene** (Ethiopia) said that the progress and rapid growth in GDP seen in the least developed countries in recent years must be safeguarded against the adverse effects of both the food, fuel and financial crises and climate change. She welcomed, in that regard, the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and expressed the hope that development partners would support it.

42. Support from development partners, though crucial, must be accompanied by action by the least developed countries themselves. It was in that spirit that Ethiopia had drawn up its five-year national strategic plan for accelerated and sustained development to end poverty, based on the Brussels Programme of Action and the MDGs. Progress to date included two reports issued in 2006 and 2007 by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation — the national Brussels Programme of Action focal point — and the completion of Ethiopia's report on the MDGs, in 2005. Poverty had fallen from 45.5 per cent in 1996 to 34.6 per cent in 2006/07. With regard to social development, Ethiopia was on track to meet Goal 2 of the MDGs, on achieving universal primary education. Furthermore, as a result of the development of primary health care based on preventive strategies, access to health care for mothers and children had been improved.

43. With respect to national economic trends, her Government had improved domestic resource

mobilization, particularly by expanding the tax base; created an environment conducive to private sector involvement; and seen the export sector grow by 25 per cent in the past four years. In addition, the diversification and expansion of export products had created new jobs. To boost agricultural production, her Government had formulated a strategy to expand key infrastructure sectors. In the same vein, the road network had been expanded, the distribution of fixed and mobile telephone lines broadened and hydropower-generated energy expanded.

44. The least developed countries could not overcome development challenges on their own. The support of development partners was critical. Regrettably, the quality and quantity of such support at the current time fell short, particularly if viewed against development partners' ODA/GNP commitment under the Monterrey Consensus. ODA must be increased and existing quota- and duty-free schemes accompanied by meaningful action on tariffs. In view of the current global crises, the bilateral and multilateral initiatives currently being discussed should come to fruition as soon as possible, to prevent the least developed countries from deteriorating further.

45. Lastly, she welcomed the decision to convene the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2011. Her Government would make every effort to support that process.

46. **Ms. Zahir** (Maldives) welcomed the record level of economic expansion achieved by the least developed countries in recent years, but noted that many challenges had yet to be addressed and that such progress might not be sustainable. Indeed, the fact that such countries were characterized by low domestic resource mobilization and investment, poor development of manufacturing industries, high commodity dependence, increasingly expensive food and fuel imports and growing trade deficits made them particularly vulnerable to a global slowdown. In addition, as a group they were unlikely to meet the goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. The current crises were likely to slow down, or even reverse, the limited progress made thus far, creating further challenges for the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

47. Maldives' three-year transition period towards graduation from the list of least developed countries had begun earlier that year. To ensure a smooth transition and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/209, her Government had established, in cooperation with its development partners, a consultative forum to facilitate the preparation of a transition strategy. Two dialogues had been held thus far, one on the Maldives Partnership Forum, in 2006, and the other on national adaptation to climate change and investment opportunities in Maldives, in 2007. The 2008 Forum would focus on the graduation of Maldives from the list of least developed countries and on the formulation of economic policies and strategies aimed at addressing the challenges of middle-income-country status. In that connection, she acknowledged the support given by Maldives' development partners, particularly the European Union, which had decided to grant Maldives an extension of preferential trade terms after graduation until 2014.

48. As a small island developing State, Maldives faced many vulnerabilities and development hurdles. Global environmental degradation jeopardized the country's chances of maintaining the high level of socio-economic progress on which its graduation from the list of least developed countries had been based. Volatile and extreme weather patterns, meanwhile, forced the country to divert its already limited resources away from strategic development towards recovery and reconstruction. Climate change adaptation was one of the pillars of the National Development Plan. A National Adaptation Programme of Action identifying the country's immediate needs in respect of climate change had been incorporated into that Plan. As a country that imported most of its food and all of its energy, Maldives was extremely concerned about rising food and energy prices. Although the situation was now relatively stable, the potential for a severe blow to its economy remained high. Her Government was aware of the risks involved and was taking precautionary measures to ensure that the crisis did not affect adversely the everyday lives and well-being of the population.

49. In addition to ensuring a smooth transition to middle-income-country status, Maldives was reforming and strengthening its democratic governance system. A new Constitution had been adopted in August 2008, the first multiparty presidential elections had been held the previous week and a new Government would assume power in November. At such an important juncture, Maldives sought strengthened and renewed partnerships with its development partners.

50. Financial market instability and high food and fuel prices would have the greatest impact on the least developed countries. Such countries required debt relief, increased ODA and technology transfer in order to address challenges relating to food security and take action on climate change mitigation and adaptation. They also needed international support to build supply-side capacities. An early and successful completion of the Doha Round and a constructive outcome to the upcoming Doha Review Conference were crucial to sustainable development and poverty eradication. To build on achievements thus far and deliver on the promises of the Millennium Declaration, collective action must be taken to address the special needs of the least developed countries.

51. **Mr. Ononaiye** (Nigeria) said that the recent global crises had exacerbated the development challenges facing the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. The international community must come together and find viable solutions to prevent the development equilibrium from breaking down completely.

52. The profound poverty in most of the least developed countries was a direct contrast to global efforts to promote economic growth during the period 2001-2010. The combination of the global food and energy crises, enduring imbalances in the international economic system and the adverse impact of climate change had exacerbated the vulnerability of already fragile States. In addition, many feared that ODA would be reduced as a result of the financial crisis. While acknowledging that those events had placed the least developed countries' attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, at a crossroads, he expressed confidence that the enthusiasm demonstrated at the High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals, held in September 2008, would be followed through and agreement with the Secretary-General's prescription for short- and long-term strategies to increase agricultural productivity and food security in the least developed countries. To mitigate the impact of global crises on such countries and to consolidate their sustained growth and economic development, priority should be given to increasing targeted ODA and FDI, providing assistance in the area of capacity-building and expanding the research base. Moreover, stakeholders should examine linkages with other issues with a view to adopting strategies that would catalyse growth without compromising people's well-being.

53. He welcomed the successful midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action, held in October 2008. As a transit developing country, Nigeria believed it was important to pool the limited resources of developing Member States in order to achieve economies of scale. That principle had guided Nigeria's excellent bilateral and multilateral relations with its neighbours and facilitated the unhindered transit of exports and imports across their common borders. In that connection, the long-established Lake Chad Basin Commission and Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission were consistent with the vision of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Furthermore, Nigeria's efforts to modernize its railway network and dredge the River Niger would move embarkation and disembarkation points closer to the affected countries.

54. While the challenges facing the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States were not insurmountable, the linkages between global prosperity and sustainable development must be strengthened, particularly in those countries most vulnerable to the vagaries of nature and the external environment. The solutions to such challenges went beyond national competencies.

55. Lastly, he welcomed the note by the Secretary-General on the outline of the modalities of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and its preparatory process (A/63/284). Adherence to and implementation of the principles and mechanisms set out in the Brussels and Almaty Programmes of Action were the only way to guarantee the existence of a significant portion of humankind, particularly those living in small island developing States, which continued to suffer from the effects of global crises and climate change.

56. **Mr. Clough** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that UNIDO was fully committed to promoting the industrial development of the least developed countries and attached high priority to increasing its programme delivery in those countries. Indeed, UNIDO technical cooperation in the least developed countries had more than doubled between 2004 and 2007. Generally, those activities fell under commitments 4, 5 and 6 of the Brussels Programme of Action. In that context, UNIDO

was promoting the development of industrial value chains by strengthening the linkages between agriculture, industry and markets. A good example of such work in the least developed countries was the Cotton Initiative for African Countries, in cooperation with WTO and other development partners. The Initiative covered many West African least developed countries and aimed to raise the value of raw cotton exports and the share of higher value-added products in exports.

57. UNIDO was placing growing emphasis on supporting South-South cooperation. In the past two years, it had inaugurated centres in India and China for the transfer of industrial know-how to less developed countries. It had also launched numerous initiatives with African and Asian least developed countries with emphasis on agro-industries, renewable energy and industrial research with an innovative approach that included public-private partnership.

58. In addition, UNIDO had expanded its role in post-crisis situations with a growing number of initiatives for employment generation and skills development, particularly for youth. Support for institutional development in the public and private spheres was being expanded and partnerships with key humanitarian agencies and inter-agency mechanisms strengthened. Such activities stemmed from the growing consensus on the importance of employment generation and private sector development in post-crisis recovery efforts and the need for an expanded UNIDO role in that regard.

59. Furthermore, UNIDO was strengthening its function as a global forum for the least developed countries. In November 2007, UNIDO and the Group of 77 and China had organized a conference in Vienna for least developed country ministers of finance and commerce. Representatives of the private sector, academia and international organizations had also attended. The theme of the conference had been how aid for trade could transform the least developed countries. The Declaration adopted at the conference identified a number of areas where UNIDO was contributing to the commitments of the Brussels Programme of Action; called on UNIDO to play a pioneering role in assisting the least developed countries in producing products that conformed to acceptable international standards; and called on UNIDO to hold such ministerial conferences on a more regular basis. Subsequently, it had been agreed that the next such ministerial conference would be held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, on 19 and 20 November 2008, in cooperation with WTO and with the generous support of the Government of Cambodia. The title of the conference would be "Aid for Trade: An industrial agenda for the least developed countries". To prepare for the conference, UNIDO and WTO had held a workshop in Kigali, Rwanda, in September 2008. Plans for the conference were well advanced.

60. Lastly, UNIDO would continue to attach high priority to mobilizing the resources that it needed to play an increasingly active role in assisting the least developed countries, thereby contributing to international efforts to implement the Brussels Programme of Action.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.